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THE
CANADIAN
CHRISTIAN EXAMINER,
AND
PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOLUME 1.

SEPTEMBER, 1837.

NUMBER 7.

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RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATIONS ETC.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

MEMOIR OF THE LIFE OF THE REVEREND ALEXANDER SPARK, D. D. MINISTER OF THE SCOTCH CHURCH, QUEBEC.

By the Rev. Daniel Wilkie, Classical and Mathematical Teacher, in that city.

The life of a Minister of the Gospel might seem in one point of view, to be attended with few of those striking and important events, which render it necessarily a fit subject of biographical notice. The greater number of his duties are performed in the shade of retirement; and even those which, by their nature, are performed in public, produce their effect in secrecy on the hearts of the members of his flock, in a manner which precludes bustle and notoriety. Yet there may be circumstances which render it fitting that his virtues should be remembered, his example and mode of instruction recorded, and that the

whole complexion of his private, social and pastoral, character be so represented, that even when "dead he may still speak." The writer of the following paragraphs, conceives the subject of them to be one of these instances; and having been invited to draw up some such view as that which they contain, however imperfect, of an individual with whom he lived many years in terms of intimacy, he feels convinced that were he to refuse compliance, he would fail in duty to the deceased and to the living, and even to the coming age. In the progress, also, of societies, whether civil or religious, it is generally found that information respecting their first founders and promoters, is eagerly sought after. That the information may not be sought in vain, is an additional reason for attempting the present memoir.

The loneliness even of Dr. Spark's situation, during the whole period of his ministry, renders that situation interesting and deserving the attention of the religious public now far more extensive. During the whole period that elapsed from the close of the revolutionary war with the United States, to the year 1820, there were in the two provinces of the Canadas, only three congregations professing the forms and doctrine of the Church of Scotland, namely, at Williamstown, Montreal and Quebec. Those who are particularly interested in the present more flourishing condition of that church, cannot be free from an interest in its previous confined and preparatory state. And all who regard with interest the condition and progress of true religion among all parties, must be desirous of contemplating the situation, qualifications and conduct of a Christian teacher in these peculiar circumstances.

Alexander Spark, the subject of these remarks, was born in the parish of Marykirk, January 1762. His parents were John Spark and Margaret Low. They were respectable persons in their station, and under that conviction, so general in Scotland, of the high utility of a liberal education, they used their best exertions to obtain for their son those benefits of instruction, by which, as they believed, they perceived in his youthful disposition the probability of his profiting.

He appears to have been early placed at the grammar school of Montrose, then under the care of Mr. Christie, author of several useful school books: and there exist abundant proofs, that notwithstanding the immaturity of his years, his time was there advantageously spent. The exercises which he performed during this period, and the notes and remarks recorded by him in relation

to the studies which engaged him, afford evidence of a mind devoted to intellectual improvement in no ordinary degree. The correctness and neatness of those juvenile performances are indications of that methodical arrangement of his time, studies and occupations, which remarkably distinguished his future life, and which always left him the power of performing what he undertook.

At the age of thirteen or fourteen at least, if not earlier, he must have entered on his academical course at the university of Aberdeen. Here the proofs of the elegance of his taste, and of the judicious distribution of his time, multiply greatly in turning over the records of his private studies. One of the most remarkable of these may with propriety be mentioned. It is a complete copy, written in a fair hand, of the demonstrations of all the propositions in the first six books of Euclid, in the Algebraical form, with elegant figures on each page, and new definitions and demonstrations for the fifth book. It contains also movable figures for many of the propositions in the eleventh and twelfth book, a short treatise on levelling, and directions for the prosecution of mathematical studies. The former, it appears, were furnished by Mr. Stuart, professor of mathematics, and evince the great interest he entertained both for the moral and religious conduct, and the scientific improvement, of his pupils. Many other papers and manuscripts in the collection that has been preserved, indicate Mr. Spark's predilection for the exact sciences, and exhibit that discipline of the juvenile mind, which is peculiarly connected with habits, not only of correct reasoning in science, but also of just thinking in the ordinary affairs and duties of life. This happy turn of mind in early life, is probably not so much to be esteemed

the cause, as one of the instances and consequences of that soundness of judgment for which through life he was distinguished.

Mr. Spark's original predisposition to the study of Theology, is manifest from the nature of the extracts which he made from the ancient authors that he read, and the frequent observations that he made upon them. Not a few of these were of an amusing nature, for he always discovered a tendency to innocent gaiety. But by far the greatest number were of that kind, which contributed to corroborate some moral truth, to illustrate some ancient custom bearing upon certain facts or doctrines of scripture, or to elucidate the phraseology of these subjects. His entrance on the study of theology, with a view to the service of the church, was therefore with him a matter of choice. And he entered upon it with peculiar advantages, both from his previous acquirements, and the possession of a mind open to the reception of truth; and especially from the distinguished abilities and amiable characters of the eminent professors under whose direction he studied. These were Dr. Gerard of King's College, and Dr. Campbell of Marischal College; the former well known for his work on the pastoral care, the latter justly celebrated for his general theological knowledge, and especially for the eminent critical acumen he has displayed in illustrating the language of the New Testament. The disposition and turn of mind of these eminent professors must have been extremely congenial to his own; and if he could not imbibe from them what was with himself spontaneous, we may be sure, he not a little confirmed by intercourse with them, that fair and candid interpretation of the sentiments of other men, that readiness to

appreciate their merits without extenuation or exaggeration, which formed through life, so marked a feature in his character.

The year 1780 was the period of Mr. Spark's removal to Quebec. For several preceding years, he had devoted his leisure time to the instruction of the family of B. Gordon, Esq. of Hallhead. Some letters afterwards passed between him and his former pupils, evincing a very sensible and becoming spirit.* This year he was pitched upon by Dr. MacLeod, a Professor in King's College, as a suitable person to answer to an application that had been made to him from the above mentioned city. This application had been made by Mr. Reid, well known in this country as having conducted a respectable academy in Quebec, and afterwards having filled for many years, the office of Prothonotary of the Court of King's Bench at Montreal. Dr. MacLeod's selection appears to have been made with the most exclusive regard to qualifications and character, and to the interest of the applicant. After stating the difficulty of such a choice, he introduces the object of his choice to Mr. Reid, as "an excellent mathematician, and a sensible, discreet young man, and having had much practice in teaching;" a recommendation amply justified by the subsequent conduct of the individual described. Mr. Gordon's recommendation is written in French, and sealed with his arms.

The voyage from Aberdeen to Quebec does not appear to have been ac-

*A writer in the Christian Recorder, believed to be Archdeacon Strachan, gives the following information on this subject. "Long after his removal to Quebec, the writer has heard Lady Harriet Gordon, the mother of his pupils, a gentlewoman of eccentric character, but of great penetration and ability, speak of Mr. Spark with much kindness, and express her warmest wishes for his happiness.

"York, 1 (C. April, 1819.

accompanied by any delays unusual at that period. Yet it occupied a length of time which must appear not a little remarkable, when compared with the present expeditious modes of travelling. Embarking at Aberdeen on the 24th Feb. Mr. Spark arrived in London the 6th of March. After delivering a number of letters, and writing others, he embarked at Portsmouth on the 11th of April. This being the period of war with France, Spain, and the United States, it is needless to say there was no sailing without convoy. After many causes of detention the fleet finally left Torbay on the 30th of May. It consisted of thirty merchant vessels, under convoy of two armed ships, the *Danae* and *Pandora*. After an alarm from a Spanish seventy-four, and some other adventures of little importance, they arrived at Quebec, on the 4th of August, something more than five months after Mr. Spark embarked at Aberdeen.

He immediately entered on the performance of the duties of his engagement, which was for three years, to be reckoned from the time of embarking. He appears to have been employed in teaching the classics, geography, and mathematics. From his ample qualifications for such an office, from his strict and upright attention to every duty he undertook, and from the sweetness as well as steadiness of his temper, it would be impossible, even if there were no direct proofs of it, to doubt of his success as a teacher of youth. There remains, however, two direct and satisfactory proofs of this success; first, the impressions still entertained by many individuals now alive, who received their instruction from him; and the offer made by his employer at the expiration of the period agreed on, of taking him into partnership with himself in the conducting of the Academy. This last

offer he thought proper to decline, chiefly as he states himself, because such a life would leave little time for reading and other occupations more agreeable to his mind. It is indeed manifest, that the bustle and constant activity of a large Academy were little suited to the quiet and contemplative habits which he always cultivated. He therefore gave notice to his employer, that he intended to return to Britain, and to apply for leave to preach the Gospel under the authority of the Church of Scotland. This resolution strongly confirms what has already been said concerning the cordiality of his choice of the Christian Ministry as his profession. In the same determination, he was unquestionably prompted further by his pious sentiments, and by his love of peace, quiet and retirement. The latter may possibly indeed, be too much indulged by persons of the sacred profession; yet the most zealous performance of its duties, admits of greater seclusion from noise and bustle, than almost any secular employment.

The explanation here adverted to was given at the expiration of his engagement in the spring of 1783. In the beginning of the month of May he retired to the country, for the purpose of acquiring a facility in speaking the French language, the principles of which he had already thoroughly studied. After spending three months in this exercise, he returned to town, and as the war still continued, succeeded, through the assistance of his friends, in obtaining a passage to Britain in one of His Majesty's ships. Having landed in the south part of the Island, he proceeded by land to the scenes of his early years.

Of his trials before the Presbytery of Ellon, no particulars are preserved; but it is certain, that he obtained license

to preach, and also ordination to the ministry, early in the year 1786. Two exegeses remain among his manuscripts, one on the necessity of revelation, and the other on the truth of Christ's satisfaction—which was written for the Divinity Hall, and which for the Presbytery, does not appear; but both are distinguished for that closeness of reasoning and pure latinity, which might be expected from their author.

The exact time of his return to Quebec is not ascertained, but it took place in the course of the year 1786. At no great distance of time from this period, he appears to have entered the family of the late Colonel Caldwell at Belmont, in the immediate neighbourhood of Quebec, with whom he lived in the strictest habits of friendship till the death of that gentleman, about twenty years after. Of Mrs. Caldwell, he has been often heard to speak in terms of the highest respect. His occupation was the instruction of their son, the present Sir John Caldwell, who cherishes the grateful remembrance of his successful and pleasing mode of communicating knowledge.

Two volumes of a common place book remain, chiefly written, as appears from the hand-writing, in the earlier part of his life, a slight account of which may therefore with propriety be introduced in this place. The articles which they contain, are many of them Theological, or relating to ecclesiastical history, some historical, others amusing, and not a few of a literary nature. Among the first, is a concise account of the rise and history of the "Society in Scotland for the propagation of Christian knowledge;" and numerous quotations and references to celebrated authors on important questions in Theology. Among the literary class must be mentioned several not unsuccessful

attempts at Poetry, some original and others translations. The wings of Simmins, and two Odes of Horace, the 15th of the first book, and the 11th of third, are rendered with much spirit and fidelity. Of the original poetry, the happiest specimen is an "Elegy on the unexpected death of an amiable child (Miss Jane Gordon of Hallhead,)" of the family, it is presumed, already mentioned.

Some time during his residence in Belmont, he began to give pretty regular assistance to the minister of the Presbyterian church in Quebec. From 1786 to 1789, he seems to have done at least half the public duty. From the latter date to the death of the minister, the whole duty, both public and private, seems to have devolved upon him; but on what conditions does not appear. From his continuing to reside in Colonel Caldwell's family, we may infer that the allowance, if any, was slender. Indeed there existed no means by which it could amount to any thing considerable.

The Society of Free Masons was then in more general estimation than it now appears to be. Mr. Spark, being a member, was of course appointed the Chaplain, and there remains in print, several addresses delivered in that capacity. They breathe a spirit of the purest benevolence, loyalty and social concord, and perhaps greater animation than most of those which are more strictly professional. In undertaking this chaplainship, his example was followed by the minister of Montreal, of whom some notice will afterwards be taken, and by his immediate successor in Quebec. Either from its exclusiveness, or professed secrecy, or other causes, masonry has of late years declined; and ministers do not now so generally connect themselves with these

societies. The object of the chaplaincy, it is beyond a doubt, was to promote the exercise of kindly feeling, and of the strictest sobriety.

The preceding minister of the Scotch church in Quebec, was the Rev. Geo. Henry, who is now remembered by the oldest persons in that congregation, as a very aged and venerable man, and incapable, for many years, of performing public duties. He died on the 6th July, 1795, when the following notice of him appeared in the Quebec Gazette of the same week: "Thursday, July 9th, died, on Monday last, in the 86th year of his age, the Rev. Geo. Henry, thirty years minister of the Presbyterian church of Quebec. To the character of an able divine, he united that benevolence of heart and practical goodness which made his life a constant example of the virtues he recommended to others, and rendered him both an useful teacher of Christianity, and an ornament to Society." From this document, it appears that Mr. Henry's ministry at Quebec commenced so far back as 1765, only six years after the cession of the country to the government of Great Britain. The incipient pastor had then reached the mature age of fifty-five. From the year 1789, when he was 79 years of age, till the day of his death, there are on record only two instances of his presiding in public worship. The last was June 30, 1793, a week before the celebration of the Lord's supper. On the character given of him above, it is scarce possible to omit remarking, what a striking resemblance was borne to him by his successor, the subject of the present memoir.

It is not perfectly clear at what precise time he was appointed to the charge vacant by the death just mentioned; nor is it even clear by what mode of

election. It is certain, however, that a call signed by a number of heads of families was presented. And having previously been ordained by a Presbytery in Scotland, as already mentioned, and having for six years at least, constantly supplied the place of the actual, though infirm incumbent, he naturally, and yet with all the formality that circumstances would permit, entered upon the office which he discharged with so much fidelity till the day of his death. In this, as in every other instance, he acted with that strict integrity, that unostentatious simplicity, and that disregard of popular applause, which were all characteristic of him.

Though this was beyond all question the oldest Presbyterian congregation in Canada, having already had an existence for thirty years, the income, at the time of his entrance upon the charge, was extremely small. During the administration of Sir Robert Prescott, a government allowance was granted of £50 per annum, and continued to his successor, but was withdrawn on the death of the latter, according to the professed economy of the present times. His income arising from the congregation, continued in the same limited and fluctuating state, till the erection of St. Andrew's Church in 1810. The stipend was then settled to be paid out of the pew rents, and did not during his life time rise above £200 a-year. From emoluments so slender, he contrived by good order and strict attention to expense, to maintain a becoming and honourable exterior, indulge his benevolent disposition towards the poor, and leave a moderate but not unsuitable provision to his widow. Besides these objects, he had succeeded at an earlier period of life, in collecting a library which in his circumstances must be considered as of

uncommon extent, containing not fewer than 850 volumes, and among them many rare editions of the classics, as well as some theological writers of the continent of Europe.

Considering the extreme narrowness of his income, no one will be surprised to learn, that he continued to instruct a small number of select pupils in classical and mathematical learning. Several of his pupils are still alive, and occupying distinguished stations. When a monument was last year to be erected to his memory, they contributed to that purpose with great readiness and much liberality.

One circumstance ought not to be omitted, as it indicates his uncommon punctuality, as well as the almost uninterrupted health, with which it pleased Divine Providence to favour him. During the twenty-four years which his ministry lasted, counting from the death of his predecessor, his pulpit was never closed, except on two occasions, when the affairs of the church required him to proceed to Montreal. The contentment of his mind was indicated by his remaining constantly at home, while the visitation of the sick, and the distribution of the alms of the church, rendered his life varied as well as useful. Nor was he without the more elegant amusements. The conversation of a small circle of friends, the perusal of the respectable literature of the day, and the political history of the time, and it was an eventful one, alleviated his mind after severer studies and more serious occupations. He was fond of electrical experiments, and had an apparatus for the purpose, constructed almost entirely by himself. The study of Botany in which he excelled, gave an interest to his walks and excursions into the country. In many of these excursions he was accompanied by Mr. Mason, an

eminent botanist, who had been sent out here to collect plants for Her Majesty, Queen Charlotte, and died in this country.

Notwithstanding the apparent solitariness of his situation, he was not often without ecclesiastical friends whom he could occasionally put in his place; and his social, friendly spirit delighted to accept their assistance, and to be useful to them in his turn when opportunity permitted. Among those may be reckoned the Rev. Mr. Henderson, afterwards minister of Irvine, who came to this country as private tutor to the son of Sir Robert Prescott, the Governor General, and was also chaplain to one of the regiments in the garrison. The occasional assistance of this gentleman he enjoyed from 1796 to 1798.

In 1802, the Rev. James Somerville arrived in Quebec, under an engagement as a teacher of youth. The frank, open, and undisguised simplicity of this honest hearted individual, caught his attention and secured a cordial welcome. During the short time he remained in Quebec, Mr. Somerville was eminently successful as a teacher, being fitted for it by adding to a sound understanding, great kindness of heart, and at the same time great firmness in his management of young persons. As the Presbyterian congregation at Montreal was then without a minister, a desire was expressed by them to receive the benefit of Mr. Somerville's ministry.—After due preparatory steps, he was accordingly ordained to that charge by the subject of this memoir, assisted by the Rev. Mr. Bethune, minister of Cornwall, on the 18th of September, 1803. The greatest charm of Mr. Somerville's public discourses, was the sterling good sense, united with the scriptural authority, of every thing he uttered. Without any recommenda-

tion in point of oratory, but by a heart overflowing with benevolence, and a tender and prudent regard to the welfare of his flock, he greatly endeared himself to their affections. And even when the aberrations of mind, with which he was repeatedly afflicted, rendered it necessary for him to abstain from public duties, they still continued to grant him their support, and to bear to him their affectionate regard. Perhaps no other congregation, left as it in a great measure was to its own voluntary efforts, ever acted with more continued liberality towards a minister. The writer of these remarks, most willingly accords to them this expression of his esteem for their worthy treatment of his friend.

In the spring of 1804, Mr. Spark received from the University of Aberdeen, where as observed, he had studied, the degree of Doctor in Divinity.

In the end of the summer of 1805, he united himself by marriage, to Mary Ross, eldest sister of David Ross, Advocate of Montreal, and of John Ross, formerly Prothonotary of the Court of King's Bench, Quebec. It was a union productive of happiness to both parties.

In the spring of 1806, an event occurred which necessarily involved the Scotch minister at Quebec in much perplexity; although in the end it contributed to the safety of his situation, and to the security of the rights of the church to which he belonged. A few words will be necessary to explain the difficulty he now felt, and the relief which he and others obtained. Whatever may have been the practice of the Presbyterian churches in other British Colonies, the right of marrying and burying persons belonging to their congregations, had been claimed and exercised by all the clergymen of the church

of Scotland settled in the countries situated on the St. Lawrence since 1759. To this practice well known objections were made, and answers equally well known, were returned, and the rights continued to be exercised. Indeed the objectors, it is believed, were not numerous, for the claim itself appeared so consonant to natural justice and to sound policy, that its relinquishment could not, in an enlightened age, be expected, and ought not to be required. Some gratitude is due to the first ministers and supporters of the Presbyterian church in these Provinces, for the stand which they made in defence of this important right. Their opposers, though not numerous, were in considerable power.

Soon after the establishment of a constitution of the two provinces, an act was passed in the Lower Province, for the more secure registration of births, marriages and deaths. This act by limiting the registration of births to the clergyman who performed the Christian ordinance of Baptism, threatened very obviously to interfere with the religious rights of not a small number of his Majesty's subjects. By leaving it to the Judges of the Court of King's Bench, to determine according to the best of their knowledge, what clergymen were entitled to keep registers and who not, a door was opened for irregularity of practice or diversity of judgment. It happened that, in the district of Quebec, though not in that of Montreal, registers were refused to dissenting ministers. An individual of this description, relying on the natural and evident equity of the thing itself, had there been no statute to the contrary, had ventured to perform some acts of clerical duty requiring registration, but without being authorised to do so in the terms of the act. In deliver-

ing the sentence of the court in this case, the Chief Justice at the time, did not think it sufficient to ground its decision on the obvious violation of an existing statute; but attempted, in a speech of considerable length, to establish the position, that the Church of England was the only established church of the country, and that all persons not belonging to it; or to the church of Rome, of which the rights were guaranteed by the capitulation and by the subsequent treaty with the King of France, came under the denomination of dissenters. Further, His Honour stated that, consequently all clerical acts requiring registration, that had been performed by others than clergymen of the said established church, or of the church of Rome, were irregularly performed, and liable to be called in question; and "to prevent confusion," he added, "a bill will be introduced this evening into the Legislature to legalise all such acts." A bill to this effect, was accordingly introduced that very evening, into the Legislative Council, by the Lord Bishop of Quebec.

Nothing could exceed the indignation with which this opinion (for it was nothing more than an individual opinion, and had nothing to do with the decision of the court) was received throughout the province, by all, except a few determined abettors of high Episcopalian notions. Dr. Spark himself heard it with the greatest calmness. His friends became more determined to stand by him: and many felt inclined to support him, who formerly had been indifferent to the cause. The intended bill passed, indeed, the Council, but after a good deal of discussion in the Lower House, was finally rejected, on the ground that the rights of the church of Scotland had always been admitted

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in the province, and ought not now to be questioned. Upon the whole, the rejection of the bill may be considered as fortunate, since the passing of it, without another of a prospective nature, would have tended to injure that church in future; and even with such an additional act in her favour, would have left her claims to rest on local, rather than general, grounds.

There were other circumstances which indicated either an intention in some quarter to deprive the church of Scotland of privileges which she had till this time enjoyed, or an opinion at least that she had not a right to enjoy them. Among these may be mentioned the opinion which began to be given out about this time, and for a few years after, that the baptism of this church was not valid, but must be repeated in the case of persons coming over into the Episcopalian church. The beginning and termination of the prevalence of this opinion, are buried in some obscurity. It probably did not last above ten or fifteen years. To the same motive must be attributed the practice which commenced also about this time, and was equally short-lived, of limiting the term Protestant to the members of the church of England. This practice which probably never extended beyond conversation, was finally abandoned, being manifestly in contradiction to all former usage, and to all historical authority.

These circumstances are now stated solely from a regard to historical truth, and not from any desire to detract from the excellence of the church of England, which is entitled to the highest respect. No church, nor any society, ought to be held responsible for the disavowed misconduct, or errors, of particular members, or particular times.

The cool and even temper with which

Dr. Spark met these various instances of opposition, did not arise from any want of the proper sensibility, nor from any indifference to the importance of the interests at stake. But he possessed a mind which never lost its equipoise; he carried with him the constant conviction that the cool but steady opposition to any attack, half disarms an adversary; and he never forgot that "*the man of God must not strive, but be gentle in all things.*" With this firm persuasion, he took all proper occasions of vindicating the rights of his church, and of his countrymen. His arguments generally left a favourable impression, for they were stated with perfect fairness, and bore the marks of equity on their side. The claims on the opposite side were so manifestly antiquated and exclusive, that their justice could seldom be admitted in generous minds. Meanwhile the records of births, marriages and burials, furnished by the ministers of the church of Scotland, continued to be received as legal evidence in all the courts in the province. In the course of two or three years, all doubts of their legality were as completely erased from the public mind as if they had never existed. Both minister and congregation emerged from the difficulty in which they had been involved, with increased dignity and respect in the public estimation.

The controversy arising from these causes, and managed with this Christian temper, produced general benefits throughout the province. Congregations of dissenters both from the churches of England and Scotland, in various parts of the country, applied to the Legislature for permission to keep registers, and obtained it. And liberty of conscience is now placed nearly on the same footing on which it stood before the passing of the Register Act.

When the great number of Scotsmen settled in Quebec and its neighbourhood, is taken into consideration, and when it is recollected that the adherents to the church of their fathers, have now swelled into two congregations; it may appear surprising that they had not built for themselves a place for public worship, earlier than the year 1809. To diminish this surprise, it must be observed that the large room in the Jesuits' Barracks, in which they met for that purpose, up to the period of two years from the date now mentioned, had till very lately before that time, served for the meeting of all the courts of justice, and of the courts of appeal of the province. This room had been assigned by the Governor for the use of the Presbyterian congregation as far back as 1767. On the erection of the present court-house at Quebec, in 1806, the courts were of course removed to that building. And in the lapse of a few years, the number of troops being considerably increased in the country, on the prospect of a war with the United States, rendered it necessary to surrender for military purposes, the rooms which had been thus occupied. For two or three years succeeding November, 1807, the congregation assembled for public worship in the lower room of the court house. But more prosperous times awaited it.

During the period now referred to, Dr. Spark used every exertion to obtain a more permanent establishment for the members of his congregation. He conceived also that he had now found a more favourable opportunity than had hitherto presented itself, for accomplishing this important object. His efforts were amply backed and supported by the late John Blackwood, Esquire, a member of the Legislative Council, and at that time, in consequence of a fall,

retired from the active commercial pursuits which had engaged his previous days. The Governor General, also, Sir James Henry Craig, a man of extensive capacity and liberal views, was very ready to second these intentions. It seemed that this was the time, if ever it was to arrive, when a permanent place of public worship must be secured. The universal respect entertained for the minister, rendered the accomplishment comparatively easy.

Accordingly on the 30th November, 1763, letters patent were signed by His Excellency Sir J. H. Craig, making over a part of the ground on which St. Andrew's church now stands, to trustees named in the deed, and formed into a corporation, for the purpose of erecting a church, and holding the ground and building in trust for the use of the congregation. His Excellency himself examined the intended site, and expressed his approbation. Subscriptions were readily obtained, and the building was commenced and completed in the course of the two following years. On the 30th November, the day well known to all Scotsmen in foreign parts, and precisely two years after the passing of the patent, the minister opened St. Andrew's church by an impressive sermon from Psalm 122. 9, *Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.* The discourse was soon after published, and is still to be met with. It treats generally of the support which religion affords to Civil Government by making the duties rendered to the latter, matters of conscience;—of the support and countenance which rulers ought consequently to afford to the ordinances of Christian worship;—of the happiness the congregation enjoyed in receiving that countenance and support:—and avows the principle of the church of Scotland, that no consecration of

particular places is to be practised, since no place is holier than another, nor more frequented by the Divine Majesty. It deserves attention also, that this sermon distinctly recognises the utter inability, and even detrimental tendency, of the laws which aim, by coercive measures, to bring all men to adopt the same articles of faith.*

The building of St. Andrew's church was followed by the practice which has since obtained in all those erected in connexion with the church of Scotland, namely, of paying the minister's stipend out of the pew rents. The pews were let to the highest bidders, and no person was to be deprived of his seat, whilst he consented to pay the upset price. A suitable addition by the government would render this system, in all probability, the best which human wisdom can invent, for the support of the Christian ministry in places where congregations are already formed. Another alteration made at this time was the introduction of tokens at the celebration of the Lord's supper, in conformity with the practice of the mother church. It is evident that, in a small society, the use of this exterior badge might more easily be dispensed with. And it must be admitted, that Dr. Spark's previous mode of administering the ordinance, in addition to its simplicity, was extremely solemn. Such said he, after describing the nature and designs of the institution, "such is this festival, the admission to which is guarded, not by gates of brass, but by the awful sanctions of the Divine Law. And to them, and to every one's own conscience, we leave the matter." A new election of elders was also made at this time, the former appointment, consisting of two individuals, being altogether inadequate to the present

*Page 17.

enlarged state of the congregation. The young persons were assembled once a week during one season of the year, for the purpose of catechising them, and laying before them plain instructions suitable to their years. The plainness, usefulness and pious simplicity of these instructions will, it is believed, be long remembered. From this time, St. Andrew's church became a rallying point for strangers arriving from Scotland, and from Presbyterian societies in England and Ireland. Here they found the religious ordinances of their native country, practised in all the plainness and simplicity which were congenial to their tastes and their habits.

The year 1806 was remarkable for the restoration, both in Europe and America, of those invaluable blessings of peace of which they had been more than twenty years deprived. The thanksgiving for this great happiness was appointed in the Lower Province for Thursday, April 21st. Dr. Spark's sermon on the occasion is still to be met with in print, and is replete with that genuine good sense, and unaffected simplicity, which distinguish all his productions. The text is from psalm XXX, and 1st verse. He first adverts to the nature of gratitude itself, its incontestible foundation in the nature of man, and its extreme propriety towards God, whose appointment alone renders all the means of happiness, physical and moral, effective to their end. He next describes in lively and affecting terms, the peculiar causes of gratitude which at that moment existed, in the deliverance of the civilized world from the evils of threatened military despotism and of lawless usurpation, and in the rescuing these provinces from becoming, or continuing to be, the theatre of war. Having clearly gone over the

general causes of thankfulness, and also still more fully the peculiar ones, he proceeds to describe the mode in which our gratitude ought to be expressed; namely, by faithful and constant obedience to all the divine commands. The concluding words may here be quoted as particularly indicative of his manner. "As we value the national blessings which we enjoy, and expect that God may be graciously pleased to continue them with us, and NOT TO SUFFER OUR FOES TO REJOICE OVER US; let us be exhorted to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world. He who is the best Christian, is also the best subject of the state. Let us banish from among us all profaneness and immorality. Avoiding all causes of strife and contention, let us endeavour to promote unanimity and concord. If we cannot be perfectly united in opinion on every point, let us at least be united in charity and good will." The prevalence of these sentiments, and corresponding conduct, he has been known to state, and state justly, to be the best criterion of the reign of Christian principles in the heart of any man. This was the last discourse prepared by himself for the press.

After the peace which was finally established in the summer of 1815, emigration, instead of enlistment in the army, began to be considered as the resource for drawing off what is called the redundant population of the United Kingdom, and especially of Ireland. It is unquestionably a resource for satisfying those ardent spirits that are too active, and too enterprising to remain contentedly at home. By their removal they certainly benefit themselves, whether they benefit their native country or not. The tide of emigration, however, which has since flowed so abundantly, was slow in its commencement. It commenced very soon after the date

just mentioned, when Quebec became the point towards which the portion of it destined for the North American Colonies, was in the first instance naturally directed. This circumstance led, of course, to the extension of the Scotch congregation in that city, and to the augmentation of its importance as a point where strangers naturally looked for advice, and not unfrequently for assistance. In forwarding these humane objects, Dr. Spark exerted himself with becoming zeal. At this time there existed no Emigrants' society, the formation of which was first proposed about the period of his decease.

Among the emigrants that at different times arrived in subsequent years, were several probationers from the Synod of Ulster. Those who carried with them satisfactory testimonials, were kindly received by Dr. Spark; but it is believed that none of them ultimately settled in the country.

In October, 1817, the Rev. H. Esson, made his appearance in Quebec, on his way to Montreal, the first of a long series of importations to supply the spiritual wants of the Canadas, but a series still far too short to satisfy the wants that exist. On the 19th of that month, he assisted at the celebration of the Lord's supper, being the first and the only ordained minister, whose assistance the pastor of that church had ever at such a time enjoyed.

During the latter years of his life, he gave a very considerable degree of attention to the improvement of the congregational music. He had himself a very delicate ear in music, and a correct taste as to its performance. By persevering efforts, and by an unaffected civility to those who volunteered their services in this laudable design, he succeeded to a surprising degree. An uncommon taste for this agreeable part of

worship was infused into a large portion of the youth. Parents encouraged their wishes; and persons of all ages countenanced and aided the design. Besides the immediate object, the improvement of the exterior form of worship, a discerning eye could perceive that this practice manifestly contributed to diffuse among the young persons chiefly concerned, the mild, uncontentious, sedate and orderly, habits of him who gave rise to it.

In the midst of these labours, he was suddenly called off from the present scene of things on the 7th of March, 1819. The following notice of this affecting incident appeared in the Quebec Mercury on the Tuesday succeeding. Though anonymous, it depicts so clearly the general strains of his preaching, the singular aptitude of his sermon to the event which was so near, and the feeling in which the public universally participated on the occasion, that it is impossible to do better than copy it at full length:—

"DIED, suddenly, on Sunday the 7th inst. DR. ALEX. SPARK, Minister of the Gospel, and Preacher in St. Andrew's Church, of this city.

"The circumstances of the death of this most excellent, and much regretted man, are peculiarly striking and impressive. He preached in the forenoon on that part of the 24th verse of the 45th chap. of Genesis, in which Joseph gave this advice to his brethren; 'See that ye fall not out by the way;' and no subject could be treated in a way more suited to excite piety and devotion. He took an extended view of the whole human race, and observed that mankind were united in the bonds of common wants and affections, by patriotism, by affinity, consanguinity, and, above all, by the enlightened and benevolent precepts and doctrines of the Christian religion. Yet he observed that this bond of union was too often dissolved by malignant or selfish passions; by erroneous views in politics, and by mistaken zeal and intolerance in matters of religion. That not recollecting the glad tidings of

“ our Saviour’s birth, announcing ‘ on earth peace, good-will towards men,’
 “ mankind had perverted these wise purposes of the author of our holy religion,
 “ and had too often spread discord and war throughout the world. He conjured his parishioners to recollect that their journey through this life was short, (as if he had a presentiment of his own approaching dissolution,) and adverting to the earnest wishes which all men, at their dying moments, had shewn to be reconciled to their enemies and to die in peace, he concluded his sensible and impressive discourse with the words of St. Paul, ‘ As much as in thee lies live peaceably with all men.’

“ After this Sermon, Dr. Spark went to a Funeral, and, on his way to Church in the afternoon, he fell down in an apopleptic fit, and almost instantly expired.

“ He was in the 57th year of his age, and 36th of his ministry; and we may say, beyond the reach of contradiction, that he was not meanly skilled in letters;—that in life and manners he observed a simplicity and innocence beyond what are seen in most men, and that few have died more universally and more sincerely lamented.”

The year of his ministry here mentioned, the 36th, refers to the date of his ordination in Scotland in 1333 or 1834. On the day after his death, the following notice appeared in the French side of the Quebec Gazette—

“ C’est avec les sentimens du plus vif regret que nous sommes obliges d’annoncer le triste evenement de la mort du Reverend Dr. SPARK, Ministre de l’Eglise d’Ecosse, en cette Ville, homme aime et respecte de tous les Membres de la Societe Heir, apres midi, apres avoir assiste a un enterrement, il retournoit a l’Eglise, lorsqu’il tomba dans la rue, pres d l’Eglise, et expira presqu’aussitot.”

Such was the life, and so unexpected the death of Dr. Spark. The extracts just made, indicate the impression made at the moment on the public. The members of Session, on assembling after the funeral, on Thursday, requested the writer of this memoir to preach on the Sunday following, a sermon suitable to the decease of their common

friend, whom he had often assisted when alive—a request, which in these circumstances, he could not think it fitting to refuse. At the desire of the Session, the last sermon of the deceased minister, a brief outline of which has been presented above, and the funeral sermon produced by the event, were given to the public.

It may be mentioned as an instance of his extreme regard to accuracy and methodical arrangement, that the list of sermons preached by him, and even by those who occasionally assisted him, is complete from 1786 to the very day of his death. His meteorological journal is also complete to the noon of the same day; but it commences with the beginning of the present century.

When the pamphlet, containing the two sermons, with a very slender introductory notice of his life, appeared, it was reviewed in the April number of the “Christian Recorder,” then publishing at York, U. C. an extract from which has already been made in this paper. With some praise of the publisher, and some severity of remark, upon which it is not necessary to animadvert at this distance of time, the reviewer does, what is of much greater consequence, ample justice to the deceased, adding also a few circumstances with which the author of the funeral sermon was not acquainted, and by which he has now profited.

With regard to his opinions on doctrinal points, the writer of this article can safely declare, that they coincided with the standards of the Scottish church. His orthodoxy, however, was not that kind which is continually obtruding itself upon the audience, as if the belief of a system of opinions were of far more importance than right sentiments and Christian conduct. Taking for granted, on all ordinary occasions, the truth of the great doctrines

of Christianity, he made it his continual aim to press home upon the consciences of his auditors the necessity of a holy, virtuous, pacific and benevolent life. This, and this alone, he considered as coinciding with the whole design and tendency of the Christian religion, as they breathe in every page of the Bible, and form the direct aim of every doctrine revealed in it.

The first discourse published by him as Minister of a Church, was preached on the 10th of Jan. 1799, on the day of Thanksgiving for the victory at the Nile. The text is Gen. XX. v. 11, where Abraham expresses his distrust of the inhabitants of Gerar, because *the fear of God was not in this place*. He thence takes occasion to show that no trust or dependence can be placed in men destitute of religious principle; and that the French nation, in its republican character, by disavowing all regard to revelation, to the being of a God, and of a future state, were rendering the greatest injury that could by any means be done to humanity, and to the happiness of mankind. However we may deplore, and must deplore the bloodshed and devastation with which all victory must be attended, we cannot, says he, but render thanks for the prevalence of just principles, and for the check that was thus put to the diffusion of the most pernicious of all errors. If, at this day, after the reign of long and interrupted peace, and the prospect of still longer, we should be disposed to question the propriety of thanksgiving for victory, we must allow at least, that it was natural at the time, and that the event itself was of vast importance. The sermon is accompanied with numerous notes, illustrating the dangerous tenets then advanced by the prevailing characters in France. It is followed by the form of Thanksgiving used by the preacher

on the occasion, which is replete with suitable sentiments very happily expressed. It corresponded with the simplicity of his character, that this sermon is stated to have been preached at the Presbyterian Chapel, Quebec.

Concerning the object of the next discourse published by him, there will be no dispute. It was preached on Thursday the 1st of Feb. 1806, being the fast appointed on account of the renewal of the war, the most bloody and destructive of all the wars that had been waged during a century, and which was not finally terminated till the summer of 1815. In illustration of the text, Eccl. VII. 14, and considering that as truly a day of *adversity*, he proceeds to consider, 1st, the dangers which threatened the British nation, including the Colonies; 2d, the sins by which these dangers were merited; and, 3d, the conduct which ought, in these circumstances, to be pursued. The dangers with which all the subjects of the empire were threatened, were no less than the extinction of that glorious constitution which has been the work of the wisdom of ages, the fruit of many a hard contest, and the subject of envy and imitation to the whole world, with the loss of all those blessings, civil and religious, which Providence had hitherto preserved, as in a great asylum, to be afterwards diffused amongst the race of men. All these dangers, he observes, we, in this remote colony, are exposed to, with our brethren in the parent state. He next proceeds to consider how justly we had deserved to suffer such adversity. An extract from this part of the discourse, the last that the limits of the present paper can admit, will serve to exemplify his reasoning on this important subject.

“Notwithstanding the light of the

Gospel, which we have so long enjoyed, and every aid for our instruction, it cannot be denied, that a spirit of infidelity is still to be found among us; that some appear hardened in sin, and callous to all the admonitions of the Gospel; careless and unconcerned as to what regards religion; unawed by the prospects of futurity, or the terrors of Divine wrath. On the other hand, we may find persons who, with the name of God in their mouth, and with every appearance of sanctity, will circumscribe or defraud their neighbour, and in private, practice the grossest immoralities: men, *who profess to know God, but in works deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.*" But where is to be found that purity of mind and manners which the Gospel requires? That integrity and cordial love of goodness? That philanthropy and brotherly love? Where is that unanimity and concord which ought to distinguish the disciples of Christ? Where is that unaffected piety which, without courting the notice of men, enters into the recesses of the soul, and purifies the heart and the conscience? Where is that pure and manly zeal which is *according to knowledge?* Not a zeal for trifles, or for matters of doubtful opinion, which produceth strife *rather than godly edifying*; but a zeal *for the faith once delivered unto the saints*; that faith *which worketh by love*, and which tends to promote union, virtue, and happiness."

In the same strain, he proceeded to press upon his auditors, the conduct which these circumstances required them to pursue, and which it was their duty and their sacred interest ever to pursue; to repent of their sins, to amend their lives, to devote themselves to the service of God, to live in virtue and peace. He assured them that God would exercise the same protection over

truth, virtue, and goodness, that he had done in all former ages; that even if their moral delinquencies should render it necessary for Heaven to chastise them, by refusing to them success at this moment, it would be far better to fall in the contest, than to be wanting in their duty; but that ultimately, victory would certainly be with those who feared God, and wrought righteousness.

On the other discourses published during his life time, namely, on the opening of the church, and on the peace of 1806, some remarks have been already made.

To attempt to draw any formal character of him, must be, after this minute detail, unnecessary. Every reader will form it best for himself. He was possessed of the keenest sensibility; but had learned to suppress all asperity in the expression of it. He was a member of all the useful and benevolent institutions that existed in his time. He was a zealous supporter of schools, and of teachers, and of all establishments formed for the benefit of youth.

In stature, he was considerably below the middle size; of a ruddy complexion, and had a fresh healthful appearance to the last. He pronounced his sermons in a clear and natural, but not a forcible voice. His hair, which he wore powdered, according to the fashion of his earlier days, had a very graceful appearance, and his aspect in the pulpit was venerable in the extreme.

On the summer succeeding his death, a monument, of Montreal stone, with a suitable inscription, was laid over his grave, by the direction and at the expense of his widow. In the course of last year, a subscription amounting to £80 currency, was raised among his surviving friends and members of his congregation, for the purpose of plac-

ing a marble monument to his memory in St. Andrew's Church. A piece of sculpture, of a very chaste design, executed by one of the first artists, containing a suitable inscription and emblems, was accordingly procured from London. It stands on the one side of the pulpit, while that of his successor, Dr. Harkness, of precisely the same design, occupies the like position on the other side.

DIVINE WISDOM DISPLAYED IN THE PERIOD OF CHRIST'S FIRST ADVENT.

The apostle Paul, who treats more copiously of the doctrine of the ATONEMENT than any other inspired writer, uses these remarkable words—"we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory."* The meaning is—we the apostles declare the wisdom of God—the fully revealed Gospel of Jesus Christ which was hidden for 4000 years in a mystery—under the veil of type and shadow—but which God predetermined before the ages—the Mosaic dispensation—should be explained by us apostles unto our glory. We may be allowed to inquire, why wrap such blessed discoveries up under the veil of mystery? Why was not the incarnation and death of the Son of God, as clearly revealed to Adam in paradise as to the evangelical prophet 3000 years after—or as they were actually manifested during our Saviour's sojourn upon earth, and are now recorded by the evangelists and apostles? We may naturally ask, if these truths do exert such a blessed moral efficiency now, if in their full manifestation they shed so bright a lustre on the character of God and the

destiny of man, why were they hidden so long a period under a veil, and only fully made known after forty centuries had swept their numerous generations into eternity? These questions lead us into a train of speculation on which we would enter with profound reverence. By them we examine into the reasons of the divine procedure, which often lie so far beyond the reach of our capacity. But within proper limits the investigation is not forbidden, and it is possible so to pursue it as "to justify the ways of God to man."

The question then to be considered, is, why was the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery for upwards of 4000 years? Now this may be resolved into another question—why was the advent of Christ into our world delayed for so long a period? or in other words, why were not the scenes of calvary enacted in the garden of Eden? On the very spot, and on the very day in which man offended, might not the great propitiation have been made through an incarnate Redeemer; and the wisdom of God, instead of being hid in a mystery of type and figure until the advent of Christ and the age of the apostles, have been clearly revealed from a period coeval with the transgression of man? Might not the remedy from that hour have become as palpable as the sun; the mercy of God as clearly manifested as his judgment? and might not the patriarch and the Jew have reverted with the same faith to a cross erected in Eden, as Christians do to the cross erected on Calvary, on which the son of God gave his life a ransom for the world?

One reason in favor of the Saviour's advent deferred, may be found in the character and the fewness of the witnesses. Had the atonement been made in Eden, it could have been witnessed only by the offending pair, whose testi-

*1 Cor. 2. 7.

mony, considering that by their sin death entered into the world, might have been less satisfactory to their remote descendants. We should say, therefore, beforehand, that it behoved such an interposition of the divine mercy to be witnessed by many spectators; that the advent of so great a personage as the Son of God should be duly heralded; and that no accompaniment should be dispensed with which might render the event impressive to the generations whose salvation it was intended to achieve.

Again, as an atonement to divine justice was to be made by suffering and price, that is by the righteousness and death of the substituted mediator, in what manner, we would ask, could this have been accomplished, had the cross been erected in Eden? The two offenders, though guilty, were not debased; they had never seen death and knew not how to inflict it; as yet they were strangers to the arts of insult and cruelty; and we can hardly conceive by what persuasives they could have been induced to act the part of Roman soldiers! There was not only then a want of witnesses and spectators, but there was a want of those agents of cruelty by which suffering could be inflicted on the propitiatory victim.

But farther, might not delay answer a beneficial purpose in the general plan, by permitting the world to discover the extent of its moral ruin that it might be prepared to judge of the greatness of the remedy? The natural consequences of sin were at first very partially known; they require ages for their full development; some of its results however early began to appear in the dark and cruel spirit of the eldest born of mankind, in the murder of his righteous brother; and long before 2000 years had passed way, the earth was so

filled with violence, and the wickedness of mankind was so great, "that it repented the Lord, that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." The deluge then destroyed the world of the ungodly—a new race sprung from Noah and his family, which in process of ages re-peopled the earth. But the sinful taint inherited from Adam was anew developed, and wickedness in every form again prevailed. That we may judge, in some degree, of the extent of this moral disease, we must consult the history of nations—contemplate the scenes of their warfare and bloodshed—visit the temples of their absurd and cruel superstitions—study man in the utter degradation of savage life—and when we are duly impressed with the mournful picture, we may the better appreciate the misery that sin hath wrought. Delay, therefore, of the more direct interposition of God, has been attended with this advantage, that by it we know something of the extent of that ruin and misery into which sin has brought us; we have witnessed its invariable tendency to aggravation; we have learned that no human power could check its progress, or discover a remedy; and the eye, not only of God's people, but of the better sort of the heathen, was directed in hope to the advent of a mediator, through whom this moral plague might be stayed, and righteousness and peace once more revisit the world.

While this progress of the malady evinced the necessity of a divine interposition, delay in the advent of Christ afforded another advantage in the length of time and the number of prophets who heralded the approach of this great deliverer. Herein we have clear and accumulated evidence that Christ was the sent of God—an evidence we could not have enjoyed, at least in the

same degree, had the advent of Christ happened at a much earlier period. But by this delay we have prophet succeeding prophet foretelling his appearance—their predictions gradually becoming brighter, more circumstantial and explicit. These prophecies referring to Christ embrace a period of nearly 4000 years, and by comparing them with the fulfilment, they afford to the church in every age a species of proof, the peculiar validity of which must appear irresistible to the unbiassed inquirer. These are several reasons for that delay which occurred between the hour of man's ruin, and the hour when the work of his redemption was finished by the promised mediator.

But besides those reasons of delay, we may assign reasons also for "the wisdom of God being hidden for ages in a mystery," that is under the veil of type and figure. There are truths which must not be too hastily obtruded on the mind of man. In order to their being received some previous preparation is requisite, to prevent our being dazzled, confounded, and overwhelmed, with too intense a light. Among these may fairly be enumerated the wondrous truths connected with man's redemption. Had the sufferings and death of the Son of God as a propitiation for sin, been announced to the offending pair in Eden, in plain and full detail, we cannot well conjecture what astounding impression it might have made, nor how it could have won their belief; for we find, that after numerous predictions of a suffering Redeemer had been clearly made, the Jews could never be brought to entertain that view of their Messiah; and even our Lord's disciples, when he had expressly declared his approaching suffering and decease, rejected the communication as incredible. There was, therefore, a wise reason for delay,

that this sublime truth of a Christ to be crucified should open gradually on the world. Accordingly we find that the frame work of every dispensation preceding the advent of Christ, tended to prepare the world for this discovery without prematurely revealing it. In the animal victims of the patriarchs, in the numerous bloody sacrifices of the Mosaic economy, we have the type and outline of his suffering who was the end of the law; and the mind of the Jewish and Christian believer was thus prepared for the acknowledgement of a high priest who should enter into the holiest of all with his own blood there to make intercession for us.

But Paul has adduced a special and cogent reason for enveloping "the wisdom of God" in the mysterious veil of type and figure—"which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."* What a sure ground of approval for that plan of a deferred advent which the divine wisdom had adopted! It would seem from this that great as the wickedness of man is—jealous of power as the princes of the world are—had they known Christ to be the Lord of glory, they would not have crucified him. Herod and his men of war would have restrained their mockery; the Jewish council would have revered their king; Pilate had bent his knee in obeisance to a greater than Cæsar; and the hosannas of the multitude would not have changed into clamour for his crucifixion. But they did not know, and it was necessary to the fulfilment of the divine purposes, that they should not know—for it behoved that Christ should suffer. No human being, however debased, would put forth his hand to touch the Lord's

*1st Cor. c. 2, v. 8

anointed, and crucify the Lord of glory, if that glory were known to him. His divine dignity, his true character, must therefore be obscured; the wisdom of God must be revealed in a mystery; prophets must couch in obscure figures their sublime predictions; the Redeemer must appear in the form of a servant to be the despised and rejected of men—lest the weakness and the wickedness of man should contravene the purpose of God. Had prophecy been more explicit, it might have bred suspicion or pointed the way for imposture; or it might have paralyzed the arms of those who, though the ignorant, were yet the guilty shedders of innocent blood: or it might have hurried an unprepared and unredeemed world to embrace Christ as their Lord, ere he had been made perfect through suffering—an issue which the just government of God forbade to offenders for whom atonement had not yet been made. It was needful, therefore, that the promised deliverer should be dimly shadowed forth, by the uninterpreted predictions of prophets, and the rites of preparatory dispensations, that human guilt unfettered might reach its consummation in the murder of the Prince of Life; while it was no less needful that prophecy should be so explicit as to be completely interpreted by the fulfilment. Both these points have been effectually secured, and both manifest the divine wisdom in the atonement deferred and long enveloped in typical mystery.

Again, let it be observed, this delay in the advent of Christ rendered it possible for the Omniscient contriver to fix on the most suitable time and place for the Saviour's appearance on our world. When the plan of a deferred advent was laid upon, the distance of a thousand years in its actual event was nothing. It only removed the faith of the expect-

ants a little farther onward, while it took nothing away from the saving efficacy of that faith—for the faith of Abel was not feebler in its operation than that of the Baptist, nor was it crowned with a less reward. There was nothing, therefore, lost to that portion of the church, which preceded our Lord's appearance, while much was gained to the church universal. We have already adverted to one result of delay—the clearer discovery of the nature of sin from the crime and misery of its actual development in the course of 4000 years. This is eminently fitted to enhance in our estimation the value of the remedy.—But another advantage accrues. Within that long period man had an opportunity of trying what he could do for himself; ample time was afforded him to invent, if such was possible, some system of religion and morals, which might counteract the corruption of the world, and prepare mankind for a better life. But notwithstanding the long period during which invention had time to work, it produced nothing but the monstrous fabrications of falsehood and superstition. The Egyptians exercised their invention, but their wise men produced nothing but a contemptible idolatry. The Greeks in their highest stage of refinement produced nothing better. Some of their sages indeed obtained more vivid glimmerings of truth, but the wisest of them did not discover any scheme of religion or morality which had any considerable influence even upon their own conduct—far less were their systems fitted to regenerate a blind and idolatrous world. Before our Lord's nativity, there flourished among this celebrated people, men of the most distinguished abilities, who had devoted their whole life to the cultivation of wisdom and virtue. Socrates, Plato, Epicurus, and other eminent sages, ex-

hausted themselves in vain in attempting to reach the knowledge of God, or to invent a method of reforming a degenerate race. They excelled in every intellectual pursuit, but in every thing pertaining to a true theology they were surrounded with thick darkness. The failure of such eminent men may safely be received in evidence that the subject was beyond man's natural reach, and that unless God draw near to us with the blessing of illumination, we shall either not search after Him at all, or search after Him in vain. Now the time which divine omniscience had appointed for our Lord's appearance, was after long observation, that "the world by wisdom knew not God"—and when enough was done to bring the conviction home to every inquirer, that unless God should reveal himself, he would remain forever unknown.

Farther, this delay permitted not only the time of Christ's advent to be happily arranged, but the place. Jerusalem the capital of Judea was the place where he had long been typically known. For many years before the birth of Christ, it had been frequented both by learned Greeks and Romans. At this period it formed one of the provinces of the Roman empire, and consequently enjoyed a community of intercourse throughout its whole extent. The languages of Greece and Rome, moreover, were then universally studied—a circumstance which facilitated the promulgation of a new faith. Thus do divine wisdom and prescience appear in every part of the plan of redemption—and we are enabled to discern satisfactory reasons for God's permitting the Gospel to be hidden in a mystery throughout so many generations.

We shall only advert to one other reason of this procedure which the apostle advances—"for, as it is written,

eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,"*—that is, the incomprehensibility of the Gospel while hid in a mystery, was one reason why the princes of the world did not know the Lord of glory, and the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. This passage is commonly, though loosely applied to the mysterious and incomprehensible nature of celestial things. The connection in which it stands, refers it not to invisible and celestial objects; but to that mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to the saints. The princes of this world, by which is meant the Jewish rulers, did not comprehend the real design of Christ's appearance. Their prejudices and ambition prevented the entrance of truth into their minds. It had not entered into their hearts to conceive that the Son of God should come into the world, merely to suffer and die as a propitiation for the sins of the world; they entertained but inadequate notions of the demerit of sin, and they could not imagine that it required such a remedy. Their law indeed involved the doctrine of a vicarious atonement; but there was a veil on their hearts which prevented them from understanding the doctrine in its application to Christ—and therefore when he came unto his own, treading the path of humiliation and suffering, his own received him not. That the Son of God should leave the throne of his glory and receive no glory on earth—that he should submit to insult, mockery, and crucifixion—the most shameful and degrading death—were results which it had not entered into their proud minds to

*1st Cor. c. 2, v. 9.

conceive, and thereby they were prepared to take that part in bringing them to pass which had aforesaid been predetermined.

How wonderful and mysterious are the ways of God! How small a part of them do we know, and yet how clearly does even that small part evince the presence of an omniscient designer. A certain profane atheist once said—had God consulted me I should have pointed out some improvements in the plan of the universe! Poor worm! he could not have formed an eye to that frame whose blaspheming spirit thought so lightly of the Creator's workmanship! And some, we doubt not, who have inquired with sceptical and presumptuous boldness into the plan of redemption, may have fancied, that they discovered defects, and inconsistencies in it, as the atheist fancied in the work of creation. We have now endeavoured, in one particular—the fact of a deferred atonement—to illustrate the wisdom of its author; and we doubt not, were all its parts and mysteries fully revealed to us, as they shall be when we have reached the vision of God, each part will appear worthy of the Eternal Mind, who hath bestowed on it an appellation more honorable than any he hath bestowed upon the material creation, when he called this Gospel **THE WISDOM OF GOD.**

OMEGA.

PRACTICAL SERMONS.

No II.

THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE PRESENT
AND A FUTURE EXISTENCE.

*By the Rev. Alexander McNaughton,
Lancaster, Glengary.*

Concluded from page 196.

Let us turn our thoughts from so appalling a spectacle to a more grateful subject of contemplation. As sin where it reigns, is the commencement of hell in the soul, and a preparation for its misery and anguish and despair; so holiness, in proportion as it is cultivated below, is the commencement of heaven in the soul, and is the sure preparation for its ineffable bliss. It is the bud of future joy, the dawn of that eternal day which no passing cloud of sorrow or suffering shall ever darken:—a view of the heavenly world, which, if we would answer the ends of our being, we will invariably cherish and act upon; yet I fear, a view far from being so generally held as it ought to be. The heaven of too many is a sort of Pagan Elysium or Mahomedan paradise, a smiling land of shady bowers and sunny plains, and gently murmuring streams fanned by aromatic gales which diffuse fragrance around; and tenanted by a race of beings, who, free from the intrusion of care and sorrow, and sickness, expatiate amid its rich and luxuriant scenery, regaled by its varied sweets. With others again less imaginative, but not more influenced by religious considerations, heaven is a mere refuge from hell, an asylum to flee to as a secure shelter from the storms of divine vengeance which fall on the devoted heads of the lost. In both these conceptions of heaven we deny not that there may be some truth; in the latter, we are assured there is, and that on the most infallible of all testimony—that of sacred writ. Bu.

both are very low and inadequate, and very imperfectly represent the heaven of the Bible. That heaven is as much in character as in place. Its truest character is that of a soul united to God, emancipated from sin, perfected in habits of holiness, of love, of purity and of enlarged spiritual knowledge;—deriving its happiness from its accordance with the purposes of a *holy* God, and putting forth the full strength of its faculties to co-operate in bringing his purposes to pass. This, my brethren, is the heaven of Christianity; and in proportion as Christ by the instrumentality of his word, the discipline of his providence, and the agency of his spirit, imparts such a character, so far does he bestow heaven *now*: for heaven is within the believer in proportion as his faith produces in him holy dispositions, and centres his affections on holy objects and pursuits. Accordingly, scripture represents believers as already entered into their rest—already come to Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem and its community of blessed inhabitants. Nor is the use of such language a mere figure of speech. They are not come to them indeed, in point of locality; they are still but on the way; nor are they come to them in lofty privilege and attainment: many cares corrode, many sorrows wound, many sins pollute them while in this wilderness of weary travail and trial. But as born anew, as children of the same heavenly Father, feeling the pulse of the same heavenly affections, they are followers of them who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises; and though at a humble distance and with many short-comings, still they do imitate them in filial reverence and cheerful obedience to their Father and their God, and in *this* enjoy a very intimate alliance and union with them. The good

work is going on within them which will make this union daily more and more intimate. In every saint on earth you behold a brother of the Redeemed before the throne: an associate of the angels in heaven; and amid all the imperfections with which outward temptations and inward corruptions taint and obscure his graces, you will discover the germ of every divine excellence which constitutes the holiness and the bliss of his brethren before the throne. It is theirs to be joined to God, to behold him, to rejoice in the light of his presence. It is his privilege also to have the rudiments of this blessedness: he is one with God in Christ; he is of those whom God chooses and causes to approach Him; and though as through a glass darkly, he yet sees Him, and enjoys the sunshine of his reconciled countenance.—Is it the high felicity of the redeemed before the throne to hold constant communion with God, and to worship Him day and night in his temple? Alas! he follows them here by very unequal steps; for in his most devotional hours he feels the depressing effects of a languid frame, and wandering thoughts, and unholy desires. But in his intercourse with God in the closet, his exercises round the family altar, at church, and at a communion table, his congeniality with them is clearly seen: and in seasons of peculiar nearness to God, when faith is strong, and hope lively, and the joys of salvation elevate his soul,—he almost feels as if already one of them; yea, and can find the bed of disease, the midnight prison, and the cold earth with the stones of the field his pillow and his canopy the skies, none other than the house of God—the gate of heaven.—Is love the pervading element of heaven—love, that golden chain which binds angels and men to each other, and all to God in happy and im-

perishable union? on earth also this is the bond of union between him and those who partake of like precious faith with himself. It is the badge of his profession—the evidence of his adoption into the heavenly family; and though difference in subordinate matters, and little jealousies and rivalries incidental to fallen man in his best estate, too often keep him at a distance from many of the excellent of the earth;—yet they who honour God and love the Saviour, are the friends in whose society he most delights; the ties which bind him to such are of the most intimate and endearing kind; and he learns to say with his Elder Brother, “Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my mother and sister and brother.” Once more: are the triumphs of redeeming love, the conquests of Immanuel, the unsearchable riches of Christ, perpetual themes of admiring contemplation and grateful praises in heaven? Christians be:ow tune their harps to bear a part in the same glad chorus: their songs are at least a faint echo of the heavenly anthems; so that when translated to the heavenly mansions, they will not feel as foreigners placed among a strange people whose habits they love not, whose language they do not understand, and in whose songs they cannot join. They will feel themselves at home, in the abode of their Father, surrounded by their friends and brethren, by all the collected excellence of earth and heaven, and sit down after their weary travel through this wilderness of sin and sorrow and death, to enjoy in the presence of their Father, and in the bosom of their Redeemer, and in the society of all the redeemed, pleasures such as a God of love can bestow, and imperishable as the pillars that support the throne of the “ancient of days.”

Thus then it appears that every individual in this world is ripening either for heaven or hell, and that what we now are, determines what we shall be hereafter.

II. A second great and solemn truth connected with this, now demands our attention. The truth I mean, is, that *the determination will be final*. The present is the only state of probation. After we have passed the barriers of time, retribution, endless retribution begins; and the character which we have carried along with us, be it good or bad, will endure. “He that is unjust will be unjust still; and he that is filthy, will be filthy still, he that is righteous, will be righteous still; and he that is holy, will be holy still.” If we have made a wrong decision, and entered another world with a character which conveys in its bosom the materials of misery and self-torture, there is no return to this to re-act our parts better; neither does the abode on which we have entered, afford the materials, or the opportunity for doing so. We have made our choice; and however fatal, however disastrous, by that choice we must abide; our destiny is fixed for ever. The future, indeed, as well as the present, is marked by progress; but *it begins nothing*. The wicked *there*, as well as *here*, will progress in wickedness, and its natural concomitant, misery; and this, probably, with still more disastrous rapidity: for there every hindrance to this united triumph will be removed; every spark of virtue will die; the last ray of hope will be extinguished; the dispositions of hell will have unbridled scope; and a whole world of unhappy beings whose sole bond of union is opposition to God, and imperishable hate to each other, will act and react upon each other in every way which can contribute to perpetuate the

empire of sin, and suffering, and despair. On the same principle, the holiness and consequent happiness of the righteous will also be progressive. Devotedness to God, love to the whole of his family, delight in holy and heavenly employments, here tender plants in an unfriendly soil and ungenial climate, there glow in their native clime, warmed by the rays of the sun of righteousness, fed by the dews of the Divine Spirit, and no longer exposed to those chilling blasts which were here wont to check them when richest in promise, will exhibit a vegetation always vigorous—the rich and luxuriant fruits of seasons which know no winter. But though there is this progress in the world of spirits, it is progress without change. “He that is filthy will be filthy still, and he that is righteous will be righteous still.” The character of every man in eternity, is formed in time. Here all commences: here are exhibited the infant features which grow up in the future man to the full maturity of heavenly glory, or confirmed stability in the temper and misery of hell. *All* changes of character must occur on earth. And, blessed be God, while earth is our residence, it is never too late for them who have the desire, to succeed in the attempt. It is true indeed that even on earth cases occur of judicial hardness and impenitence; cases, in which men are for their aggravated wickedness abandoned to themselves, and left without any antagonist influence, to fill up the measure of their iniquities. So that, while on earth they are in a manner the tenants of hell, the victims bound for the sacrifice; and though scarcely, yet certainly moving on towards the place of blood. Yet, if not for these, still for those who *will* apply for it, there is a remedy. And while the breath heaves the bosom and

the life blood warms the heart, if we truly seek God, we shall assuredly find him. At the eleventh hour, after years of aggravated transgression have spread their guilt over our souls; after many ordinances, providences, and convictions, have been resisted, till the *habit* of resistance has appeared fixed as the taint of the Ethiop’s skin, our case is not wholly desperate; for there is a remedy yet within reach—one adequate to reach the disease to its core. The blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin in its guilt; and his spirit, in its pollution; *all sin*, be it red as crimson, or black as hell. And none by faith ever rolled his burden on an atoning Saviour and a sanctifying spirit, whose suit was rejected. But here is the place, the only place of successful approach to God. In another world there remains no more sacrifice for sin, no more fountain of purification. He who rejects them here, rejects the last offer of Sovereign mercy, the last gift of divine love; and *Justice* takes its course upon him in the awful inflictions of a self-wrought doom; which he can neither alter, nor avoid, nor mitigate, nor terminate throughout the undecaying ages of an eternal world.

MISSIONARY AND ECCLESIASTICAL
INTELLIGENCE.—
THE INDIA MISSION.

*Report to the General Assembly, by the
Committee for the Propagation of the
Gospel in Foreign Parts—1836.*

“At Edinburgh, the 25th day of May, 1836.

“The General Assembly called for the Report of the Committee on the Indian Mission, which was given in by Dr. Brunton, the Convener, and read.

“The General Assembly highly approve of the Report, which they authorise to be printed and circulated through the Church; and at their unanimous request the Moderator returned the warm and cordial thanks of this House to Dr. Brunton, the Convener, and through him to the Committee, for the great, persevering, and successful exertions which they have made in favour of the scheme of extending the knowledge of Christian truth throughout the vast regions of the East.

“The General Assembly renew their former recommendations to the Ministers throughout the Church, that they continue their exertions in aid of the funds of the Mission, and earnestly recommended that in every parish there be a collection yearly, in behalf of this important cause; and that one minister in every presbytery be appointed to receive contributions, and transmit them to the treasurers, the Rev. Dr. Gordon, and Harry Inglis, Esq., W. S.

“Extracted from the Records of the General Assembly, by

JOHN LEE, Cl. Eccl. Scot.”

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REPORT.

In reviewing the transactions of the by-past year, your Committee feel great cause of thankfulness to God for the signal blessing bestowed by Him on the work in which they are engaged. Within the field to which their reports have hitherto been confined, there never was more ground for sanguine hope; and new departments of usefulness have been opened to them—of which they trust that, under your direction, they may be enabled most profitably to avail themselves.

The first of these has arisen out of the proposal, which they reported to the last General Assembly, by the missionaries employed by the Scottish Missionary Society at Bombay, to be received into connection with the Church of Scotland. In regard to that proposal, your Committee were instructed to “give it their favourable consideration.” Accordingly, immediately after the rising of the Assembly, a transaction was entered into with the

Scottish Missionary Society, on this subject; and your Committee report, with great satisfaction, that it was speedily closed on terms which are considered as advantageous to all the parties concerned. Your Committee were uniformly met by the Directors of the Society in the most brotherly and Christian spirit; and the result is, that, from the 1st August last, this Mission has been placed entirely under your superintendence; while the Society engages upon certain conditions, to bear for five years, a share of the expense. Your Committee have apprized the Missionaries at Bombay, of their wish, that, in so far as local circumstances and local engagements will allow, your establishment there, like that at Calcutta, should turn its chief energies to the training of native missionaries. They have rather, however, solicited fuller information on the subject, than given directions for any immediate change. There has not been time as yet for an official answer; but a letter written in the interval, by the Rev. Dr. Wilson,—a name dear to all who value learning, and devotion, and Christian zeal,—leaves no doubt of the spirit which that answer will breathe. Your Committee have the happiness of knowing that it will be met with similar feeling by your Establishment at Calcutta.

From a letter to a member of your Committee, by Dr. Wilson, dated 25th December last, your Committee learn that, since the announcement of the transfer of the Mission to the Church of Scotland, a Seminary has been instituted in Bombay, on the same principles as the one at Calcutta; and that there were in it at that date upwards of 170 pupils; Parsis, Jews, Jains, Hindoos, Musalmans, Armenians, Roman Catholics, &c. &c.

One part of the Bombay plan, in which your Committee feel a deep interest, is the “Ladies School for destitute native Girls.” It was begun by the lamented Mrs. Wilson. The ladies of Bombay, anxious to pay a tribute to the memory of its excellent founder, and well aware of the unspeakable

importance of its object, have espoused its interests warmly. In this labour of love they hope and entreat to be assisted by their Christian sisters in Scotland.

The next new department of usefulness has presented itself at Madras. The proposal was conveyed in a letter from the Rev. Matthew Bowie, one of the Scottish chaplains there. One new and interesting feature in the enterprise at Madras is thus stated by Mr. Bowie. "All of the pupils pay their fee, and purchase the necessary books; one of which is a Bible for all who can read it with tolerable ease. This is regarded by every one as a degree of success quite unprecedented. We all knew that many would accept a Christian education for their children, if offered gratuitously, rather than leave them uneducated; but it was not understood nor believed till now, that they would *pay* for a Christian education."

Your Committee, after having very carefully examined, through the testimony of trust-worthy persons who had long been resident at Madras,—the human probability of success attending this enterprise, were led unanimously and cordially to adopt the proposal. They are now on treaty with a Missionary to enter on this very promising field of labour.

Your Committee rejoice in the connection thus established with each of the three presidencies, as an unequivocal proof, that a most favourable impression is made upon the public mind in India. They indulge the most cheering hope, that these sister institutions will co-operate cordially for their mutual benefit—will stimulate each other by zealous exertion—and will be crowned, through the Divine blessing, with abundant success. God grant that each may become "a plant of renown," striking deep its roots, and spreading wide its branches, till they shelter, and refresh, and nourish the whole land!

The munificence of an individual, whose name your Committee are not at liberty to mention, has placed at their disposal the sum of £1000, as the commencement of a

fund for establishing a Mission in the country of the Sheiks; in which, from particular reasons, the donor feels an interest. Your Committee have warmly recommended the object to those persons, whether in Britain or India, who are likely to share in the feelings of the donor, and to promote the growth of the fund.

In regard to your establishment at Calcutta, your Committee continue to receive the most cheering accounts of its prosperity and usefulness. They refer, not merely to its own undiminished numbers and efficiency, as attested by the account of its Fifth Annual Examination. They are enabled to appeal, for its growing influence on the public mind in Bengal, to the most decisive authority which can well be quoted on such a theme. When the late Governor-general, Lord William Bentinck, was leaving India,—in reply to an address which was presented to him by the various Missionaries resident in Calcutta,—he was pleased thus to express his opinion of your establishment, and of its efforts. "I would give them as an example the school founded exactly upon these principles, lately superintended by the estimable Mr. Duff, that has been attended with such unparalleled success. I would say to them finally, that they could not send to India too many labourers in the vineyard, like those whom I have now the gratification of addressing. Farewell. May God Almighty give you health and strength to prosecute your endeavours, and may He bless them with success!" Since his return to Europe,—in answer to a letter of acknowledgment from the Convener of your Committee, for this very gratifying notice of your undertaking, his Lordship is pleased to say—"It is impossible to praise too highly the management of the seminary established by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland at Calcutta; and in saying this, I speak the general opinion of the European community at that place. Its great success, and its great claim to encouragement, consist in the complete victory that those who have had the direction of it, have, by

their tact and judgment, been able to gain over the distrust and prejudice which the natives have hitherto felt to all education of which the knowledge of the scriptures formed a part, and of which Christian ministers were the agents. It is but justice, on the other hand, to say, what will be amply confirmed by Mr. Duff, that the patronage of some most enlightened native gentlemen, uninfluenced by any authority, have very much contributed to these happy results." In corroboration of these views, entertained by one who has had the fullest means of information, and whose enlightened zeal for the prosperity of India is admitted on every hand, your Committee have to state, that, in the last letters which they have received from Calcutta, it appears, that the parent institution in Calcutta is growing in usefulness—that the branch at Takee is fully restored from its temporary depression—and that new establishments, of a similar nature, have been fixed at Gloucester and at Ranspore. The demand for teachers trained in your own thoroughly Christian method, is increasing from various districts of central India. When this growing demand can be fully answered by you, may we not hope, that, among those who thus undertake what, for the present, is the *elementary intellectual and religious training of their countrymen*, there are not a few who will finally devote themselves, under the blessing of God, to the work of the Christian ministry in their benighted land.

On the subject of avowed converts to the faith, your missionaries continue to speak and act with most commendable caution. "There is no part of our work, as you may well believe," says Mr. Mackay, "which occupies more of our thoughts and prayers than the state of the upper classes in the school with regard to religion; and no part of which we can speak less decidedly. They have long ceased to be idolaters; they are firm believers, on conviction, of the truth of the Christian evidences; and they have correct and scriptural notions of their relative duties,

and their need of a Saviour. All this education and preaching can accomplish, and, when rightly employed, will accomplish; but it requires a higher influence to change the heart. Often have we hoped that we perceived the undoubted workings of the Spirit, until a relapse into carelessness showed us that we had been deceived. Education has raised them to the level of the nominal mass of Christians at home; it is by the prayers of the faithful that they are to be raised higher. One of themselves thus expresses himself, 'when we are with you, when we read the Bible and the books you have given us, or when we are alone and pray to God, we feel all the awful importance of religion; but when we go among our friends, it vanishes quite from our minds.' O that God would grant us a small number of intelligent and pious young men, among whom the waverers might find congenial and profitable society! The advantages would be incalculable; for, even as it is, in all the missions here, by far the greater number of new converts are brought in by the native Christians. At present we have every reason to believe that two of our most promising young men will be very soon baptized, and we have ground to hope that their example will be followed by others. But we have been so often disappointed that we fear to speak positively. We desire your prayers, and the prayers of the Church, that the work of the Lord may be seen amongst us with the love of Christ." In individual cases, such alternation of hope and fear are, in present circumstances, inevitable; but, in so far as human anticipations may be trusted, superstition is tottering in India, and a most momentous crisis is at hand! Let us pray for its speedy and successful coming!

Your Missionaries continue, so far as they are able, the exercise of preaching, "Nearly two months ago," says Mr. Mackay, "we commenced a series of sermons and lectures on the gospel, in our chapel at Simla. They are in English, for the ben-

elit of the young natives, (now amounting to thousands) who pursue the study of that language, and who have no other way of acquainting themselves with the blessed doctrines of our Redeemer. From my illness, almost the whole burden has hitherto fallen on Mr. Ewart, who preaches every Sunday evening. Our success has been most encouraging; the chapel is crowded with the students of the Hindu college, and the most promising of the native youth; who attend most regularly, and listen with every appearance of interest and attention."

"I am now preparing an additional series of lectures for weekday evenings, on the deistical systems as compared with each other, and with Christianity. This subject has been selected in consequence of the fact, that nearly every educated Hindu in Calcutta professes deism.

"Mr. Lacroix still continues his valuable services in Bengali on the Wednesday evenings."

"I am prosecuting," says Mr. Ewart, "the study of Bengali, as closely as time and circumstances will permit. For the last ten months I have been daily engaged in reading and studying with my Pundit; but some considerable time must still elapse ere my Bengali vocabulary can enable me to make even a short address in that language. If God spare me in health, however, I am resolved to prosecute my studies until it shall be in my power to preach the gospel of peace anywhere in Bengal. Until we can address the gospel to the general mass of the people, the plan of our Mission cannot be regarded as fully developed. All the dealings of Providence with regard to our Mission seem calculated to forward the cause in which we are engaged; and we look to our own beloved land for the means and the men for carrying on more efficiently the plans which we have adopted."

The negotiation which had been in pro-

gress for lodging your seminary in certain buildings to be rented from government, has failed, in consequence of the establishment of a medical hospital under the same roof. You are thus thrown back upon your own resources for the erection of suitable buildings; accommodation, without which, the comfort and efficiency of your establishment must be lamentably crippled. For this indispensable purpose, your Committee had pledged themselves to the "Corresponding Board" at Calcutta, to provide for four-fifths of the whole expense, (not exceeding £5000 in all) provided that the remaining fifth were subscribed in India. The offer has been accepted and the work is begun. This, therefore, is in itself an object for which, independently of your ordinary expenditure, it will be necessary to solicit the increased assistance of Christian charity.

In regard to what has been doing at home, for rousing zeal towards your great cause, and for enlarging public bounty on its behalf, your Committee beg leave to refer to a printed statement, which they lay herewith on your table, and which has been largely circulated among the contributors to your fund. With that indefatigable zeal which characterizes him, Dr. Duff after itinerating in the north and in the west of Scotland, diffusing information, and organizing permanent associations for the advancement of your work, is now performing the same laborious duty in London. He is thus, as is usual with him, preferring the interest of your great cause to the personal gratification which he would have derived from his attendance here, in his place as a member of Assembly. The impression which has been made in London is most favourable; and your Committee have ground to anticipate from it very gratifying results.

Under the circumstances which have thus been reported, your Committee earnestly hope that you will be pleased, of new, to recommend this great work of

Christian charity to the bounty and to the prayers of the people of Scotland.

In name, and by appointment of the Committee,

ALEX. BRUNTON,
Convener.

EDINBURGH COLLEGE,
25th May, 1836.

NOTE.

In reporting on the state of the funds at this date, the Treasurer begs to observe, that it was found necessary some years ago, to extend the Financial year from May to the end of July; the latter being for various reasons the most convenient time at which to close the accounts. In consequence of this arrangement, they cannot exhibit a complete view of the receipts of the current year. But they have much satisfaction in making the following statement.

Comparative view of the income of the General Assembly's Foreign Missions, as at 24th May, 1836.

Amount of Receipts from			
31st July, 1834, to 24th			
May, 1835,	£2191	14	3
Do. do. 31st			
July, 1835, to 24th May,			
1836,	4548	17	7½

Increase of the current year			
above the corresponding			
period of last year,	£2357	3	4½

Amount of Receipts for the			
whole of last year, that			
is from 31st July, 1834,			
to 31st July, 1835, ?	£2556	8	0
Do. do. from			
31st July, 1835, to 24th			
May, 1836, as above,	4548	17	7½

Being an increase at this			
date above the whole of			
last year, of	£1992	9	7½

It may be proper to observe that in the above sum of £4548, received since the

21st July last, are included some very munificent contributions which cannot be regarded as a part of the regular income, such as donations from two members of St. Stephen's Church, one of £200, and another of £300. It is also to be remembered that of the above sum, more than £1200 was collected by Dr. Duff, in the course of his tour through the North and West of Scotland. But on the other hand, there is ground to believe that the effects of Dr. Duff's visits, will be to secure permanently larger, and more regular contributions than heretofore. Indeed from the communications which the Committee have received from all parts of Scotland, as well as from the Scotch Churches in England, and especially in London, where collections have been made during the past year to the amount of nearly £500, it cannot be doubted that the friends of the cause feel themselves pledged, not only to maintain in their present efficiency, but to extend the various Missions now under the superintendence of the General Assembly.

SPEECH OF THE REV. DR. DUFF,

AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND'S FOREIGN MISSIONS, EXETER HALL, WEDNESDAY, MAY THE 8TH.

The Rev. gentleman gave some very interesting details respecting the progress and prospects of the Church of Scotland's Indian Missions—details, some of which produced a very great impression on the audience. He then proposed to consider the second part of the motion put into his hands, which referred to an increase of liberality and an increase of labourers. I shall, said he, at once proceed to the subject, by asking, as in the sight of the omniscient God, Can it be alleged or pretended that all Christians at present give what they really can? Or, that all have gone forth to the field of labour who are really qualified? I pause for a reply. But if things greatly change not from what they